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Armstrong Creek NDIS participant and local Strongwoman, Ainslee Hooper is defying odds lifting weights many would never dream of doing with or without a disability.

The 44-year-old wheelchair user said she discovered the strength sport when her partner, James, started powerlifting at the gym and his coach asked why she wasn't doing it too.

"I thought no way would I go to a gym. I felt intimidated amongst these buffed people with tattoos, I was scared to talk to them, but they were lovely, embracing me and motivating me to begin power lifting," she said.

"I started with bench press and ended up competing in it. Now I have discovered Strongwoman and I just love competing in these events. It's been great for my mental health and general wellbeing, and I often surprise people with what I'm capable of."

A strong disability advocate with a 'can do' attitude, who doesn't utilise many supports, Ainslee's sheer determination solidified a business idea for friend and fellow strongwoman competitor, Nicole Brown, who went about looking at ways to support Ainslee and others with disability to modified gym equipment so they can train inclusively.

"I was like the Guinea Pig while trainers were trying all different weights to help ground my wheelchair so it wouldn't move forward while I attempted a rope pull," Ainslee laughed.

"I thought oh, I don't know about this, but they were fantastic always adapting equipment, mindful of my safety, so I could train confidently."

Seeing this obvious gap in inclusiveness in the sport of Strongman/woman, Nicole has now addressed it, launching online business 'All Made New'.

Nicole said the first program she will run is All Abilities Strength and her main goal is to target inclusiveness in strength sports for people with disability.

"We will be running other programs, but we want the first to be the All-ability Strength program, and we've created Strongman and Strongwoman All-abilities categories, which is what is already happening overseas in events.

"All-abilities events do happen a little in Queensland and in New South Wales, but Australia-wide there isn't a dedicated strength program to promote, encourage, motivate, and advocate for all-abilities athletes, that's why I really wanted to create one."

"I'll also be working closely with Strongman equipment maker, Stand or Submit, to adapt, make, and supply all-abilities gym equipment for people with disability so they can use it at

home and in gyms right across Australia," Nicole said.

"I've been involved in strength sports for a long time. I see the positive effects it has on people's physical and mental health in a matter of weeks, so my aim is to get as many people as possible into strength sports using equipment to meet their needs."

Nicole said it's been great working with Ainslee to get her first All-abilities Strength program off the ground.

"I'm currently in talks with gyms around Australia about using the All-abilities Strength program to encourage people with disability to come along and get involved," she said.

"Inclusion is so important and providing suitable gym equipment for people with disability means they have a place where they can go; where they can meet people and get to know them, and they will have all-abilities equipment to help them get started," she said.

"It's fine if they just want to train. Not everyone wants to compete. I just want to give people a sense of purpose and a sense of community, which is incredibly important, so Ainslee and I are really excited to see where this goes."

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